

City of Gaithersburg

COMMUNIQUE

A Clock Tower/Plaza For Gaithersburg (page 4)

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FY 08 Budget Highlights

Increased personnel to deliver priority City services, a homeownership assistance program, a clock tower and plaza in Olde Towne, a new Youth Center in Olde Towne, and an indoor Aquatic and Recreation Center off of Route 28 are just some of the key initiatives funded in the FY 2008 budget, adopted by the Mayor and City Council in June.

The budget totals \$50.6 million, representing a 10 percent increase over FY 2007. Approximately \$39 million falls under Operating Expenditures, while Capital Improvements make up the remaining \$11.6 million. For the 44th consecutive year the City's budget has been funded without a tax rate increase.

What follows are key initiatives funded in the FY 2008 budget, broken down by department. It is by no means a complete list of City projects and programs. The FY 2008 budget is available for viewing at www.gaithersburgmd.gov. For more information call the Department of Finance and Administration at 301-258-6320.

Police

- New officers, equipment, vehicles and uniforms
- Pilot beat plan
- In-car digital video recorders
- Photo radar
- Emergency management coordinator



New police officers and equipment are included in the FY 08 budget.

Environmental Affairs

- Residential and commercial green building requirements
- Assessment of the former Nike Missile Site
- Stormwater management and stream improvement projects
- Greenhouse gas emissions assessment
- Climate protection strategies

Parks, Recreation and Culture

- Planning and design of new indoor Aquatic and Recreation Center
- Planning and design of new Youth Center in Olde Towne

- Upgrades to existing Senior Center and pre-development activities for possible new facility
- Mentoring program for at-risk high school students
- Implementation of bicycle and pedestrian Master Plan



Concept design for Youth Center in Olde Towne, provided by BMK Architects.

Planning and Code Administration

- Development and land use proposals, including Crown Farm, Casey East, Watkins Mill Town Center, and Olde Towne
- Planning charrette for Kentlands Boulevard Commercial District (see page 8)
- Study of effectiveness of Ride-On bus service for residents in town centers

City Manager's Office

- 2007 elections
- Citizen survey
- Homeownership assistance initiatives and relocation assistance for residents displaced by development
- Implementation of MPDU and Workforce Housing programs
- Legislative advocacy, especially for the Watkins Mill Interchange and Corridor Cities Transitway
- County Executive's Municipal Revenue Sharing Task Force

Information Technology

- Comprehensive disaster recovery plan
- Police technology projects including in-car digital video recorders and enhanced crime analysis

CITY OFFICIALS

GAITHERSBURG

Mayor
Sidney A. Katz

Council Vice President
Stanley J. Alster

Council Members
Geri Edens
Henry F. Marraffa, Jr.
John B. Schlichting
Michael A. Sesma

City Manager
David B. Humpton

The Communiqué,
a newsletter for the
City of Gaithersburg,
is produced by the:

Public Information Office
Britta Monaco, Director
Gaithersburg City Hall
31 S. Summit Ave.
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
301-258-6310
www.gaithersburgmd.gov

- Upgrade of application infrastructure, including website and desktop publishing environment

Economic Development

- Solicitation of qualified development proposals for two City-owned properties in Olde Towne
- Coordination of Clock Tower/Plaza project in Olde Towne (see page 4)

Finance and Administration

- Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Rule 45 implementation and compliance

Public Works

- Planning and development of large capital projects
- Maintenance of City's growing infrastructure including roads, sidewalks, parks and facilities

- Street resurfacing for Washingtonian Boulevard and street reconstruction in Dorsey Estates, Audubon Square and Bridalwood Subdivisions
- Street light modifications including Park Summit, Fernshire Farms, Washingtonian Townes/Suffield Drive, Hutton Street, Park Avenue and Russell Avenue
- Maintenance efforts at City Hall, Casey Community Center and Kentlands Mansion



Street resurfacing and reconstruction projects are planned for several communities in the coming months.

City Offices will be Closed in Observance of the Following Holidays

Labor Day

Monday, September 3
(recycling pick-up – Saturday, September 1)

Veteran's Day

Monday, November 12
(No impact on recycling)

Thanksgiving

Thursday & Friday, November 22 & 23
(recycling pick-up – Saturday, November 24 for those who recycle on November 22. November 23 is a regular recycling pick-up day)

Christmas

Tuesday, December 25
(recycling pick-up – Saturday, December 22)

New Year's Day

Tuesday, January 1
(recycling pick-up – Saturday, December 29)

Gaithersburg Solicits Feedback through Random Citizen Survey

This fall 1,200 City of Gaithersburg residents will be randomly selected to participate in a mail-in survey to evaluate the City's services, programs and policies. The data will be used to help elected officials and City staff prioritize strategic initiatives and direct resources.

Surveys will only be available to those randomly selected, and can be provided in Spanish upon request. If you receive notification in the mail, we encourage you to complete and return the survey. The more feedback we get the more accurately we can tailor our efforts to meet community needs.

For more information contact the Office of the City Manager at 301-258-6310.

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

Mayor and Council Meetings are held the first and third Monday and Work Sessions are held the second and fourth Monday of each month, unless otherwise noted. They begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Mayor and Council Chambers located at City Hall, 31 South Summit Avenue, Gaithersburg. Call 301-258-6310 to confirm.

Upcoming Meetings

September 4 (Tuesday) & 17
October 1 & 15
November 7 (Wednesday) & 19
December 3 & 17

Upcoming Work Sessions

September 10 & 24
October 8
November 26
December 10

PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning Commission Meetings are held in the City Council Chambers at 7:30 p.m. the first and third Wednesday of each month unless otherwise noted.

Upcoming Meetings

September 5 & 19
October 3 & 17
November 7 & 21
December 5

A complete list of Mayor and City Council and Planning Commission meetings is available under Calendar of Events at www.gaithersburgmd.gov. Meetings can also be viewed live on the City's Comcast Cable Channel 13, and via streaming video on the website. Minutes of past meetings are available on the website. For more information call 301-258-6310.

MEETINGS

MEETINGS

Vote November 6

Gaithersburg residents will cast their ballots for three City Council Members on Tuesday, November 6, 2007. The terms of office for Stanley Alster, Geri Edens and John Schlichting will expire in November.

City residents who are registered to vote in Montgomery County are automatically registered to vote in the City election. To confirm registration, contact the Montgomery County Board of Elections at 240-777-VOTE. **The last day to register to vote is Monday, October 8, 2007.**

Registered voters will receive a sample ballot and a notice of election, which will indicate one of six polling places: City Hall, *Izaak Walton League, Kentlands – Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, Asbury Methodist Village, Potomac Oaks Clubhouse, or *Villa Ridge Community Room. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. (*New polling place.)

This year Gaithersburg will permit “no excuse” absentee voting. In previous elec-

tions, absentee ballots were only issued to those individuals who would not be in the City when polls were open or who were physically unable to travel to a polling place. This year voters will not be required to give a reason for requesting an absentee ballot.

Applications for absentee ballots may be picked up in person at City Hall during normal business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday), requested via telephone at 301-258-6310 or downloaded from the internet at www.gaithersburgmd.gov between September 10 and November 6, 2007. Completed applications can be mailed or dropped off at City Hall, 31 South Summit Avenue.

Candidates’ packets for residents interested in running for office are available at the second floor reception area of City Hall. Candidates must file a petition of nomination with the City Board of Supervisors of Elections via the City Manager’s Office.



The petition must be signed by at least 100 City residents who are qualified voters.

Petitions and proper paperwork must be returned to the City Manager’s Office by 5 p.m. on Monday, September 24, 2007.

When petitions of nomination have been validated by the Board of Supervisors of Elections for the City of Gaithersburg, the candidates’ names will be placed on the ballot. Note that residency and other restrictions apply. Candidates’ packets contain full details.

For complete election information please contact Sarah Paxton in the City’s Manager’s office at 301-258-6310 or visit the City’s website at www.gaithersburgmd.gov. ■

Learn More About the Candidates

Look for a Gaithersburg Voter’s Guide in your mailbox this October, with candidate interviews, statements and detailed election information. After October 6, candidate statements will also air on Gaithersburg’s Cable Channel 13 and will be available for viewing online at www.gaithersburgmd.gov

A Clock Tower/Plaza for Gaithersburg

by Jeanne North

From ancient times people have devised ways to mark the passage of time. Early Egyptian sundials, water clocks of China, the monoliths of Stonehenge, the great Aztec stone calendar, all were instruments of telling hours, months, seasons. Refinement in the art of telling time came much later: it wasn’t until the first half of the 14th century, say experts, that “large mechanical clocks began to appear in the towers of several large Italian cities.”

For villagers in small towns and cities throughout Europe, what better way to tell time than to look up at the tower and hear the clock in the main square striking the hour? Travelers on the Continent today still seek out the main square of old cities and gather around to admire the clock tower and its melodious sound.

Gaithersburg will soon be joining the tradition of these cities with a plaza and clock tower of its own. With the approval and full support of the Mayor and City Council, the City is looking forward to having a revitalized central square at the junction of Summit and Diamond Avenues, presided over by a 65-foot clock tower, possibly with a bell to strike appointed hours with a melodious note. With landscaping, benches and amenities that will make the plaza an inviting place for people to gather, the Clock Tower/Plaza project promises to bring new energy and vitality to Olde Towne.

The tower’s situation near the historic railroad station has particular significance, points out David Shayt, a local resident, clock tower advocate and curator of the Division of Industry with the Smithsonian



Existing plaza area at Summit and Diamond Avenues. Cover: Concept design for the Olde Towne Clock Tower, developed by the Verdin Company.

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Elecciones Municipales serán el 6 de noviembre

Los residentes de Gaithersburg podrán votar por tres miembros del Concejo de la Ciudad, el martes, 6 de noviembre del 2007. Los mandatos de Stanley Alster, Geri Edens y John Schlichting concluirán en noviembre.

Los residentes de la Ciudad que estén registrados para votar en el condado de Montgomery están automáticamente inscritos para votar en las elecciones Municipales. Para confirmar su inscripción, contáctese con la Junta de Elecciones del condado de Montgomery al 240-777-VOTE. **El último día para inscribirse es el lunes, 8 de octubre del 2007.**

Los votantes inscritos recibirán una balota de prueba con un aviso sobre las elecciones, el mismo que anunciará los seis locales de votación: la Municipalidad, *Izaak Walton League, Kentlands – la Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Últimos Días, Asbury Methodist Village, Potomac Oaks Clubhouse o *Villa Ridge Community Room. Las urnas estarán abiertas desde las 7 a.m. hasta las 8 p.m. (*Nueva locale de votación.)

Este año Gaithersburg permitirá el voto ausente “sin excusa”. En elecciones previas, los votos ausentes sólo se otorgaban a los individuos que no estaban en la Ciudad el día de las elecciones o que estuvieran físicamente indispuestos de salir y llegar a un recinto electoral. Este año los votantes no tendrán que dar una razón para solicitar la balota ausente.

Las solicitudes para balota ausente se pueden recoger en persona, en la Municipalidad durante horas de oficina (de 8 a.m. a 5 p.m. de lunes a viernes), por teléfono al 301-258-6310 o por Internet a www.gaithersburgmd.gov entre el 10 de septiembre y el 6 de noviembre del 2007. Las solicitudes completadas las puede enviar por correo o llevarlas a la Municipalidad, al 31 South Summit Avenue.

Los paquetes de candidatos para aquellos residentes interesados en lanzarse para un cargo público están disponibles en el área de la recepción del segundo piso de la Municipalidad. Los candidatos deben completar una petición de nominación con la Junta de Supervisores de Elecciones de

la Ciudad por medio de la Oficina del Administrador de la Ciudad. La petición debe ser firmada por lo menos por 100 residentes de la Ciudad que estén calificados para votar.

Las peticiones y la documentación apropiada se debe enviar de regreso a la Oficina del Administrador de la Ciudad, antes de las 5 pm, del lunes, 24 de septiembre del 2007.

Cuando las peticiones para nominación hayan sido validadas por la Junta de Supervisores de Elecciones de la Ciudad de Gaithersburg, los nombres de los candidatos serán incorporados en las balotas. Recuerde que aplican restricciones de residencia entre otros. Los paquetes de los candidatos contienen detalles completos.

Para información más completa sobre las elecciones, favor de contactarse a Sarah Paxton con la Oficina del Administrador de la Ciudad al 301-258-6310 o visitar la página *web* de la Ciudad al www.gaithersburgmd.gov. ■

Aprende Mas de los Candidatos

Busque la Guía del Votante de Gaithersburg que le llegará por correo durante el mes de octubre, con entrevistas a candidatos, declaraciones e información detallada sobre las elecciones. Las declaraciones de los candidatos también saldrán al aire en el Canal de Cable 13 de Gaithersburg y lo podrá obtener por Internet al www.gaithersburgmd.gov después del 6 de octubre.

A Clock Tower/Plaza for Gaithersburg

Continued from page 4

Institution. A mechanical clock near the train station summons up the City's past. The City was incorporated in 1878, the train station was built in 1884. "The City really came into its own in the 1880s," says Shayt, "at the very time that large mechanical tower clocks were becoming popular throughout the United States."

Hoping to see a clock tower in the City, Shayt proposed it to the City Council in 1994, and with the Council's support, the Clock Tower/Plaza project gradually be-

came a reality. In 1998, the City located and purchased a 1915 Howard weight-driven pendulum regulated time-and-strike tower clock. The clockworks, restored by Abernethy & Son of Toronto, Canada, are displayed in a temporary housing in the Activity Center at Bohrer Park, awaiting their permanent home.

For Tony Tomasello, Assistant City Manager and Director of Economic and Community Development, the plaza is about economic development, the clock

tower its central amenity. The \$1.4 million set aside for the Clock Tower/Plaza will actually go for much more than just the tower with a clock. Much of the money will go for the realignment of roadways, landscaping, sidewalks, park benches and trees, plus underground work to relocate water pipes and electrical wiring.

Many hope that the redesigned central plaza of Gaithersburg will provide a push to redevelopment. Speaking of the Clock Tower/Plaza project at a public hearing after a Council work session in June, one enthusiastic citizen said "it could be a spark to a revenue-generating engine for as far as the eye can see." ■

A Multicultural Man for a Multicultural City Part of a series profiling Gaithersburg's elected officials.

by Jeanne North

Michael Sesma didn't start out to be a politician. But when he saw some things about City governance that he thought needed changing, he ran for Council Member in the 2005 election, and won. His platform emphasized a more responsive, open government and a more reasonable approach to growth.

Born in Japan, Sesma was the son of a U.S. Navy officer and a mother who was a native of Japan. He grew up in San Diego, where he attended public and Catholic schools, very conscious of his Mexican American heritage. "As far as I know," he says, "the Sesma family I'm related to was a land-grant family in California," dating back to the days when California was still part of Mexico. The name "Sesma," he says, can be traced to Spain's Basque region.

With a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of California at Riverside, he qualifies as a psychologist, but his research and professional activities led him to a preference for designation as a neuroscientist.

Before moving to the Washington area in 1995 to work at the National Institutes of Health, he held appointments at the Washington University Medical School, the School of Optometry at the University of Missouri – St. Louis, and at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. Preceding his family to the area by a few months, Sesma said he looked all over and settled on Gaithersburg. They chose to live in the neighborhood of West Riding. With "lots of tall trees, well kept lawns and kids on bikes,



Sesma, accompanied by representatives of the Gaithersburg and Montgomery Village Rotary Clubs, during National CHARACTER COUNTS! Week in 2006.

it seemed a peaceful, pretty, family-oriented place."

With three daughters in elementary and high school Sesma quickly became involved in PTA activities and discovered a number of issues of concern to him. One was overcrowding in schools and on roads: how would parents quickly be able to get to schools in the event of some emergency, like the sniper incident? Concern for development "that precedes the needed infrastructure" was a reason for Sesma choosing to run, who says he wanted "to provide a voice for people with [those] concerns."

"I was depicted as an anti-growth and anti-development candidate," which, he says was not fair. "Part of our ticket was to support reasonable growth that would enhance the quality of life and to raise questions about growth that would threaten that."

For Sesma, the City faces three, no, four, main issues: affordable housing; Olde

Towne redevelopment; public safety; and the need for a new Senior Center to serve the increasing senior population.

Described as the "first Latino elected official in Gaithersburg," Sesma says he thinks that's true, adding, "the City is more than 20% Latino now [and] we should have a Council member that understands and represents that community." Still, he hopes "all citizens are my constituency."

How does he feel about his job on the Council? Flashing a grin, he says, "I think it's cool! I like it." How would Sesma like to be remembered? As someone "who found solutions to problems and concerns that have brought benefit to all our residents, that I was thoughtful and considerate, that I had a vision to maintain quality of life that makes Gaithersburg a destination and a home to come back to." ■

Festival Puts Gaithersburg on the Map

Part of a series of profiles about City departments and employees.

by Jeanne North

When Janet Limmer applied for the position of Recreation Supervisor with the Parks Department 30 years ago, one of her interview questions was, "What would you do to put Gaithersburg on the map as a special place to visit?"

Limmer had an answer that earned her the job: she gave an overview of a big street festival with food and entertainers that would draw residents to downtown Gaithersburg in celebration of the City. Happily, her idea coincided with the renovation of Olde Towne, and as Limmer says, in tracing the history of the Celebrate Gaithersburg Festival, "we went from the City Hall front lawn to over the tracks and on to East Diamond Avenue." This year, the 26th annual Celebrate Gaithersburg Festival will stretch from City Hall along Summit and Diamond Avenues and offer an array of food, music, entertainment and amusements to an expected 30,000+ visitors.

From noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday, September 16, Gaithersburg residents can stroll the blocked-off streets of Olde Towne to sample menu items from local restaurants in a "Taste" of Gaithersburg, enjoy live music, shop at the City World Market for handcrafted wares made by local artisans, and thrill to amusements and entertainment. Talent will shine on four strategically placed stages: Sister Hazel and Pat McGee & Friends on one, local entertainers on a second, Latin music on a third, and community groups on a fourth. Sarah Messier and Nansie Wilde, programmers with the Arts and Special Events division, are planning the Festival. Says Messier,



A reenactment with Abraham Lincoln was part of the Festival in 1986. Today festival goers enjoy the "Taste" of Gaithersburg, the City World Market, and many more diversions.



"We try to mix it up and get something for everyone on these stages."

Getting to the Festival will be easy: take the shuttle from Lakeforest Shopping Center, and you can be dropped off at either Gaithersburg Elementary School or at the corner of Olde Towne and Fulks Corner Avenues. From either place it's an easy walk in to the Festival. Bike valet parking will also be available near the North Summit Avenue entrance. No bikes, skateboards or pets in the festival, please. For details, visit the festival's website at www.gaithersburgmd.gov/celebrate.

The Festival is just one activity of the Arts and Special Events Division. On the arts side are concerts, museums, galleries, the Art in Public Places program, the Arts Barn facility, and much more. On the special events side are flea markets, baby bazaars, activities for children, and major community activities like the Celebrate Gaithersburg Festival, Fourth of July Concert and Fireworks, the Labor Day Parade,

St. Patrick's Day Parade, Oktoberfest, and the ever-popular Winter Lights Festival, to name just a few. The tally of attendance at activities organized by this division: about 255,000 a year.

Arts and Special Events, led by Janet Limmer, is just one of four divisions of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department of the City. Facilities, led by Terrilyn Lahs, administers the Picnic Pavilions, Casey Community Center, the Activity Center at Bohrer Park and the Miniature Golf course. Youth Services, led by Tim Smith, sponsors Youth Centers, the Skate Park, camps and after school programs. Lifetime Recreation Services, led by Jim McGuire, includes aquatics and recreation classes, the Senior Center and sports. Director of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture is Michele McGleish.

The aim of the Department is to enhance the quality of life of Gaithersburg. Come and enjoy! ■

Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture

Director:

Michele McGleish

Location:

Activity Center at Bohrer Park
506 South Frederick Avenue
301-258-6350
parksrec@gaithersburgmd.gov

What they Do:

The Department provides quality programs, facilities and parks in accordance with the priorities established in the City's Strategic Plan and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. These programs, which are available to persons of all ages and cultures, are designed to enhance quality of life and

encourage a sense of pride in the community, highlighting Gaithersburg as an outstanding place to live, work, learn and play.

FY 2008 Budget:

\$7,029,601 (72% for personnel, 25% operating, 3% capital outlay)

"If I Were Mayor..."

Jameka Watts, a 4th grader at Gaithersburg Elementary School, was selected as the City of Gaithersburg's winner of the 2007 "If I Were Mayor..." Maryland Municipal League and Maryland Mayors' Association essay contest. As the winner, Ms. Watts officially opened the June 18, 2007 Mayor and City Council Meeting, recited the pledge of allegiance and read her winning essay. She also received a plaque and a gift card.

"Ms. Watts had some very creative ideas for involving young

people in local government," said Mayor Sidney Katz, "including trying to inspire them to clean up trash and educating them about local government by using TV, radio and the Internet. There were more than a dozen entries to this contest, and it was quite heartwarming to see the children's ideas about getting involved in their community."

This annual program is coordinated by the City's Division of Human Services. For more information call 301-258-6395 x1. ■



Jameka Watts officially opens the June 18 Mayor and Council Meeting.

If I were Mayor, I would inspire young people to help their community by cleaning up trash and help with summer schools. How I would educate young people is by putting this information on TV.

Also, on a website because you know that teens like to go on the computer, and I would put it on the radio. Also, I would put together a pep rally with a mascot saying, "Please help your community by volunteering to do things. Yeah!"

A Mayor is somebody that runs a city or town and that helps their community. Do you know how the government and Mayor get money to fix things like roads, buildings, and more? Well I do. They get the money from parents paying taxes. If they don't have enough money then they try to get teenagers to do something for their community.

The first thing I would do to educate the youth in my community about municipal government is by making a speech. Also, by sending government people to speak to them at schools and assemblies.

Also I would conduct classes and make posters. Lastly, I would put it in letters, flyers, newspapers, road signs, and signs at the football games.

That's what I'll do if I were Mayor.

Jameka Watts – Grade 4

Gaithersburg Elementary School

Alice Byrne – Teacher

Sharon Jones - Principal

April, 2007



Kentlands Boulevard:

A Vision for the Future

The Mayor and City Council invite you to participate in a planning charrette to explore the dynamic Kentlands Boulevard Commercial District. Help us create the vision by participating in sessions that will explore development intensity, streetscape and public/open space, retail locations, transportation improvements, conservation, preservation, and more.

Kentlands Boulevard Commercial District Planning Charrette

October 4 – 9 (Session Times Vary)

For a detailed schedule and locations of meetings visit www.kentlandsboulevard.com or call 301-258-6330.